Use of Scientific Technology for Benefit of Tribal Children

*275. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:
DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the various measures which the Department of Science and Technology can take in the area of Melghat Forest of Amravati district of Maharashtra where 4500 children have died due to malnutrition and disease during the last three years and several are likely to die in this rainy season;

(b) in what way can modern science and technology come to the benefit of these tribals; and

(c) what concrete steps will be taken by this department for preventing this great calamity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) to (c) The livelihood of the tribals of Melghat forest region now largely depends on agriculture. One of the reasons of loss in the agriculture production is the absence of scientific water management practices. Therefore, an expert group of the Department of Science & technology has recommended a project titled "Developing livelihood base for tribals in Melghat through watershed development" for implementation in this area. The activivities under this project include diversion drains, field bunding and drainage, contour trenches, planatation, gully plugging, organisation of local community and people's participation and *in situ* moisture conservation.

Grant of Industry status to news papers

*276. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Language Newspapers Association has urged Government to give the status of industry to newspapers;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to grant the said status to the said organisations; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to implement the recomendations of the Ram Mohan Rao Committee?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) Ministry of Industry has not received any such representation.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 11 out of 12 recommendations of the Committee have been accepted by the Government. It has not been possible, however, to extend a special concessional rate of postal tariff.

MOU signed by Department of Public Enterprises with an Enterprise

*277. DR. B. B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an MOU is signed every year between Department of Public Enterprises and an Enterprise;

(b) if so, the details of the sets and achieved during 1996-97 particularly in power, oil sector and steel sector;

(c) whether the Goevrnment have set up any committee to review the functioning of MOU system.

(d) if so, the main finding of the said report; and

(e) the government reactions thereto?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Question do not arise.

Industrial sickness in the country

*278. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that industrial sickness has been a matter of serious concern for the country for over last two decades;

(b) if so, the detatils thereof, industry-wise, and the reasons therefor; and

(c) effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government to tackle the problem of industrial sickness?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Data on sick industrial units assisted by banks in the country is compiled by the Reserve Bank of India. According to the latest available report as at the end of March, 1996, the position of industrial sickness in the country and the outstanding bank credit is as follows:

(Rs. in crores)

Category	No. of units	Outstanding Bank Credit
1. SSI Sick	262376	3721.94
2. Non-SSI Sick	1956	8823.19
3. Non-SSI Weak	418	1203.12
TOTAL :	2,64,750	13,748.25

The industry-wise position of sickness indicates that industrial units in textiles, tngineering, chemicals, iron & steel, paper and electrical sectors are the ones most affected.

A number of causes, both internal and external, often operating in combination, are responsible for industrial sickness. Main causes include deficiencies in planning, management, marketing, technology, etc.

(c) Government has taken a number of steps to tackle the problem of industrial sickness which, inter alia, include, guidelines of Reserve Bank of India to banks, amalgamation of sick units with healthy units, setting up of Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction under Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, National Renewal Fund, National Equity Fund, etc.

High cost of packaging in India

*279. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that food processing and other agro based industry